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The Centrality of the Cross

BY FREDERICK W. NORWOOD

And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. John 19:19, 20.

OBJECTION was taken to Pilate's choice of a title for the Man who hung upon the cross; but no one objected to the subconcious impulse which caused him to record it three times, first in Hebrew, then in Greek, and then in Latin.

Of course, he would know that all three languages were spoken. But why did he think it important that all men should understand his inscription? The accompaniments of the scene were sordid enough. The cross of Jesus was but one among three, and the other victims were social derelicts—malefactors, thieves.

What was the fateful or clairvoyant urge which expressed this pitiful title, which the cross itself branded as an accusation, in Hebrew, the language of religion; in Greek, the language of culture; and in Latin, the language of government?

Did Pilate know, without knowing that he knew, that the outstretched arms, with the pierced hands, would call all three to a halt? Was Pilate, like Balaam of the ancient story, a prophet in his own despite? Was there a similar voice speaking in his soul, "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy whom God hath not defied?"

Pilate knew nothing of Balaam, and presumably not much of God. He had become prophetic while despising prophecy. He stood by the stubbornness which every such man takes refuge in at last when he has been pushed beyond his own self-respect. Too late! But the last assertion of the independence he had surrendered was flung out: "What I have written, I have written."

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The cross receded from his view as he turned again to his official duties; and like a sign in the heaven it went its way down the ages, arresting the attention of mankind as it drew to itself religion, culture and government: a sign, a condemnation and a promise. No one knew it. No one would have believed it. Only Destiny —the inexplicable—traced its hieroglyphics across the changing skies as the centuries rolled on.

THE CROSS AT THE CENTER OF THE WORLD

Always men have denied it, as they still deny it. But no one can really dispose of the word that Jean Paul Richter said of the man upon the cross—"The mightiest among the holy, and holiest among the mighty, who lifted, with his pierced hands, empires off their hinges, and turned the stream of time into new channels, and still governs the ages."

So little do men know. They think they can read the ages, but they know nothing at last but what the ages read out to them. "Take him away to his cross," said Pontius Pilate. And the soldiers, with rude hands, planted the cross in the very center of the world, in the middle of time, in the heart of destiny.

The cross of Christ is central! Hebrew, Greek and Latin, which then were all-inclusive, are now spoken of as "dead languages," though each of them has left a pale shadow like the tail of a comet. Men speak other tongues, but the cross still speaks to their hearts as it spoke long ago.

For although tongues change, the heart remains unaltered. We grow confused with syllables, and we cause confusion by shrouding the cross with syllables. But deep at the heart's center is always the central appeal which in the cross becomes articulate.

There was a tinker's son named John Bunyan—who lived long after Calvary and long before our own day —who once limned a picture with his pen, as scanty of outline as a cartoon, as empty of explanation as a metaphor, but recognized by millions as when a flash of lightning lights up an experience. He pictured a burdened man coming to a little hill whereon stood a cross, where at sight of it his burden fell away into a sepulcher: and he saw it no more.

The passage is most cryptic and dramatic. The tinker's son was wise not to explain it. If he had done so it might have sounded to us like Hebrew or Greek or Latin, which, once so vital, are now "dead" languages. Theories about the cross tend to be short lived. But the experience of the cross is perennial. "Deep calleth unto deep." The heart of man at its deepest calls to the deep heart of the universe. That is the real meaning of the cross, which in itself was but two rough-hewn slabs of wood, but with a Man upon it who is yet not "a" man, but The Man.

WHAT IS REAL RELIGION?

Put it this way. I suppose everybody would agree that the supreme thing in any realm, whether of religion or of culture or of government, is that the worser elements in man's lives should be subdued and the better part of their endowment released. That is the whole problem of life. If that could be done, this world would be a suburb of Paradise even now. But it is the hardest thing of all to do. It is the one thing that all wise men know must be attempted. Religion has a clear enough insight into the fact that, unless this kind of thing happens to its exponents or its devotees, that religion is not real. That religion is real which overcomes the baser elements in man's endowment and releases and inspires the better elements.

But men are just as agreed about it in society, perhaps more so than they are in the realm of religion, because they see the need more clearly. Your eugenist is always trying to discover means by which only the best might be bred in men and the worst might be eliminated. A Continental philosopher asserted that the only hope for the improvement of mankind is to begin before birth. You must choose your stocks and breed the best; and there is undoubtedly some truth in the assertion. But one would be an optimist to suppose that all the truth was there. It does sometimes happen—I have seen it, and so have you—that two invalid parents produce a renowned athlete. It has frequently happened that two commonplace parents have produced a genius. These biological sports are the despair of the eugenist. Herr Hitler believes that if you can only make the nation Aryan—whatever that means—you will eliminate the problem of which he is conscious. It seems to me a political invention, rather than a scientific one. It is doubtful whether there is any pure-blooded nation in the world of today, and it is certainly more doubtful whether all people bred from that one stock would inevitably be released from the defects of human nature so that its perfections might be made manifest.

RELEASING THE IDEAL

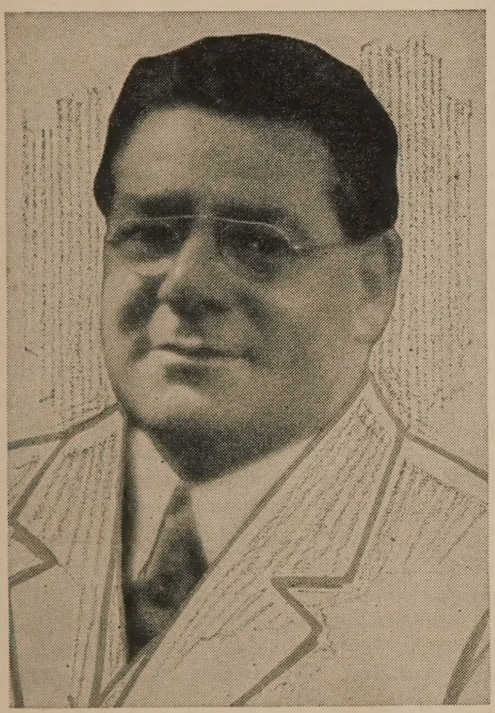
In Russia they believe that, if you could eliminate the intelligentsia, you could breed the right kind of nation. Certainly men are thinking about it, for the fact is that society is not possible if the baser elements in human nature are allowed to run loose or become dominant. Psychologists have come to the conclusion that most of our defects arise from secret resistance to this elemental impulse. I have no doubt about it myself. But I have much doubt about the suggestion that the cure for it is to release your elemental propensities. Surely the only cure is to elevate them, or sublimate them, or change them for something higher.

The fact is that our complex human organization now knows of one thing it dare not face, and that is elemental man giving the rein to the baser things that are in his nature. Anything that deserves to be called civilization is a conscious effort to suppress or reduce or eliminate those baser elements, in order that something finer and better may be set free.

The educationist is aware of it. He dreams that if he can only put righteous ideas into men's minds, this miracle would happen. I do not discredit it, for it does happen in part with multitudes of people, thank God. But no one would assert that it is infallible. For obviously in any school, or in any church for that matter, where precisely the same teaching is given, some would avail themselves of it and go upward, and others would neglect it or even be led to stumble by it and go downward. And always there is the problem of the boy who escapes all your theories.

That is one thing men are reluctant to believe: that emotions are greater than intellectual processes where character is concerned. Something fine gets a grip of a lad when his life is going to waste. It may be that he sees a sudden vision of a fairer destiny for himself, or it may be that a pure and wholesome love comes into his heart and for the sake of someone else he girds up his loins, shakes off his inhibitions and delivers himself over to some great and wonderful impulse.

The sociologist knows all about it. His leading idea is that if you could only put men into a wholesome environment they would change. I do not dispute it. There are thousands of people who would change if you gave them a decent environment. There are thousands of



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people who are socially penalized by an environment which is tolerated by society, but which is intolerable to everything that could be called justice. But it does not work out automatically. For who does not know the man or woman whose social environment has been everything that could be desired, and yet they become derelicts and wasters? And who does not know, thank God, the boy or girl, the man or the woman, whose social environment was everything that is abominable, and yet they arose like knights, or they grew like flowers, out of the murk, and fought a good fight and ran a fine race?

And in government we know it. Unless government becomes utterly corrupt, all sane legislators know that, unless you can do something to elevate the thinking and the living of men, not all your contrivances and rules and regulations, penalties and promises can save society. With far too much complaisance we let society become debauched by those who are unscrupulous. But we are always fighting for it. In so far as we are earnest, that is the one thing we are fighting for, that the animal-like, the lawless, the bestial may be lessened in men's lives, and the man-like, the exalted, the ideal may be released.

Whenever a nation—and this I say to you solemnly—proceeds upon the assumption that any other nation is inevitably derelict or bad, and must be treated in that light for the future, that nation is preparing for itself judgment—a judgment that may be forced upon other nations as well. You may give up your civilization, and stop talking about it and dreaming about it and engineering for it, unless you believe that there is something in human nature that can be redeemed—something evil that can be moderated, something fine that can be released.

THE CROSS A SPIRITUAL REALITY

What does it all mean if it does not mean exactly what I say, that the cross of Christ is central? The cross of Christ is a spiritual fact, not a physical fact. There is no virtue in the physical fact of Christ's death on a cross. Two rugged beams of wood, blood-stained, that is all. I will not lend myself, not for an hour, to the mere superstitious dragging of the physical symbol of the cross through the ages. It is the spiritual reality of the cross I am pleading for. All those forces are gathered up into it which are latent in man, and which strive for the reduction or the cure of his lower self and the release of his higher self. The cross stands for all that. That ought to be comfort to some of you who are theoretically a little bit uncertain. You do not know just where to find yourself amidst the dogmas.

Well, if you are doing something out of sheer faith in human nature, if you are doing something to release human beings from the downward pull of their worser selves to something higher and finer, you are working in the spirit of the cross. You might not know it, any more than Pontius Pilate knew what he was doing. But you are. And conversely, if you do not believe in human nature, if you do not believe that something evil can be redeemed or that something fine can be released, well, you are not in harmony with the cross. How can you be, even though you were the Pope of Rome or the Archbishop of Canterbury? You are out of touch. You may have got hold of a cluster of dogmatic beliefs, but you have missed the meaning of it all. How can it be otherwise?

THE WAY TO THE CROSS

When a man comes today, in this twentieth century—though perhaps he could not use the language of Bunyan, and the language of the New Testament puzzles him a great deal—and out of the depth of his innermost human nature cries for deliverance from his evil, cries for the energizing of his good, cries for the grace to strive against evil, cries for the harmony of union with the divine, then for him Christ has not died in vain. He has found his way to the cross. The cross is central. If that is not right, nothing is right.

The cross is struck into the middle of the world, into the middle of time, into the middle of destiny. The cross is struck into the heart of God.

The Great Business of Being Christian

By Edgar DeWitt Jones

Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you. . . . For if you love them that love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the Gentiles the same? Ye, therefore, shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5:43-48.

THERE is something thrilling about a great pulpit theme. If the title of a book contributes fifty per cent of its popular appeal, as some say, a powerful subject is half the success of a sermon. A preacher may not be able to preach great sermons, but if he chooses great subjects, the likelihood is there will be a greatening of his preaching. Look at this subject—"The Great Business of Being Christian." It carries with it the idea of a stupendous enterprise. It suggests a serious and far-reaching undertaking.

Let it be conceded that there are a multitude of people who perceive no great business, no mighty enterprise, in Christianity. They have no background for such a perception. They are unacquainted with the heroisms, the crusades and the achievements of the Christian faith. They are aware only of the mistakes and failures of imperious ecclesiastics and the travesties that pass under the name of religion. They have no intimate relationships with sacrificial disciples of the Christ; or if so, their contacts have been unfortunate. Their attitude may be explained on the ground of ignorance or prejudice or both.

There are those also who are nominally Christian, whose names are on church membership rolls, and yet have failed to sense anything vast, important or thrilling in the Christian life. They have been in the church but not of the church. They have held church membership as of less importance than adherence to a political party, a social club or a fraternity. Others bury their idealism in organization, satisfy their souls with statistics, and cease to worry over the business of Christianity to captivate and transform society. To all such, whatever the cause of their defection, the great business of being Christian is vague, fantastic, impractical, utopian.

It is possible to make Christianity too easy, to water it down until it loses the heroic note, prophetic strain, gripping appeal. Substitutes for Christian living are, alas, more prevalent than we like to believe. The history of Christianity indicates several ways in which an easier way may be substituted for the exacting way that demands one's best, commandeers one's all. Ritualism, for instance; how often have beautiful forms and impressive ceremonies been used to take the place of a sacrificial way of life! Again, the impression has been widely held and taught that the acceptance of creedal statements is the equivalent of heroic Christian practices. It was not so in the beginning. It has never been so at any place or period where Christianity has been a telling force, a high venture, a thrilling crusade.

In the words of a modern prophet, the late Dick Sheppard: "Primarily, Christianity is a way of living—an attempt at a certain kind of life—and not a philosophy. In the first instance it has nothing to do with intellectualism or theology, nor even with membership in a society. Theology will, and churchmanship may, follow; but they are attempts to explain experience and aids to those who have determined to accept the way of living and the standards of conduct which Christ demands."

Just what is involved in this great business of being Christian?

I

The great business of believing in a Christlike God. This is not easy. Such a belief can be achieved only through patient, courageous experience. It is less taxing to the incredulous to believe in a "Supreme Intelligence," "a Master Mind," "an Almighty Architect" than in a Heavenly Father. It is easier to believe in a Creative Mind back of what we see than to believe that this world came by chance, that it just happened, that "life is an accident in a back water." But to believe in a Christlike God, a God who knows, a God who loves, a God who cares—such a belief requires courage, faith, fortitude. And to believe in a God who loved us to such a degree that he unveiled himself in the life and ministry of Jesus, who in the end died the death of a malefactor, not because there was no other way, but because he chose that long, last mile for the humblest of earth—who will say that it is easy to believe this and live out the implications that are found therein? Such a belief does not seem to harmonize with the facts of life—suffering, injustice, disappointments, disaster. Continually the question dancing before our eyes is, If God loves us, why do we suffer? Always the cry from the central Cross rings in our ears: "My God, why?"

Ponder the question put so pathetically by Philip in the upper room. "Lord," he said, "show us the Father and it sufficeth us." Is there an older question than this, or a newer one? And how plaintive it is—"Lord, show us the Father." What is God like? How shall we think of God? Is there a more fundamental question, or a more searching inquiry? "Show us the Father," said Philip, as the shadows deepened in the upper room. And Jesus answered that question greatly, and for all times: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; And how sayest thou then, show us the Father?"

Of the mighty voices among the younger preachers of today, one of the most understanding and arresting is Leslie D. Weatherhead of the City Temple, London. I do not know another paragraph which so confirms the vast idea and the comfort in the belief in a Christlike God as does this, from his mind and heart:

> So, when I see him nailed to a cross and yet looking up into the face of God and calling God "Father," I find myself saying over and over again that there are

things I cannot understand, there are things which would seem to contradict the loving nature of God; but if Jesus says that God is a Father, and if Jesus can leave his life in the Father's hands, and be certain, by faith, that all will work out well in the end, I can leave my life to him, and I can commit to his capable hands the lives of others, and get them, even in the hour of darkness, to hold on in the dark. The faith of Jesus in God is the lamp which I press to my breast, and its light never goes out. . . . For the God who, on Easter morning, vindicated the faith of Jesus will vindicate those who bet their lives, and risk everything for the belief that he is what Jesus said he was, even though they found what Jesus found, that Gethsemane and Calvary lie between.

Perhaps there are those who deem this fine statement mere theory. To such the following episode out of the hard school of experience may have a deeper appeal. Once there was a father whose only son was uncommonly brilliant and promising. He was the apple of his father's eye, and when the youth met death in a railway accident, that father's grief was terrible to witness. When the first paroxysm of grief was past he strode directly to the home of the pastor of the church where he and his family had held membership for years. He did not wait to make his presence known at the door, but finding it ajar, entered the house, passed into the library, seized the minister roughly by the arm, and cried: "Tell me, sir, where was God when my son was killed?"

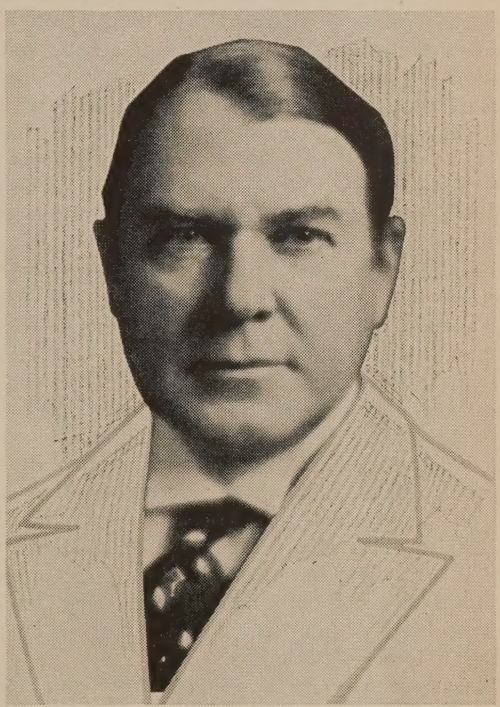
It was a terrible moment, tense, poignant; but the wise and understanding minister, a man of long experience, was equal to the exacting demand. "My dear friend, God was just where he was when his own Son died." And what did such an answer mean? It meant that the belief in a Christlike God at such a time of deepest need enabled a teacher of the Christian religion to mediate assurance to a breaking heart. It meant that that father, in the courage of such a thought of God, pulled himself together and in a little while was strengthened to climb those altar stairs that slope through darkness up to God. It is, let it be reiterated, no little thing to believe in the God whom Jesus addressed as Father, and with whom he rested his cause when the world had savagely rejected it. Aye, this great business of being Christian!

II

Then there is the Christlike business of forgiving one's enemies. This is a hard saying, too hard for many of us. It was hard for Simon Peter, who asked Jesus how many times he should forgive those who had wronged him. Peter wondered, and ventured to ask whether seven times would not be enough. Many of us would stop short of seven times. Jesus answered, "Not seven times, Peter, but seventy times seven," by which, of course, he meant that there is no end to the obligation to forgive those who wrong us.

Not so long ago the front pages of the newspapers carried the story of a father's forgiveness—a clergyman, by the way, of the Episcopal Church. In a southern city the son of this clergyman was killed at the hands of his wife. It was another of those sordid domestic tragedies where the old-fashioned ideals of love and marriage have gone to wreck and ruin through divided loyalties and the playing fast and loose with moral standards older than the Victorian period. The father hastened to the side of his daughter-in-law, who was in a prison cell, and this is what he said, heart-broken but calm: "I forgive you; my heart bleeds for you. In some way there may come ultimately some good out of what now seems altogether evil."

This was the story on the front page of a thousand newspapers, and the words of the rector, "Of course I forgive her; how could a Christian do otherwise?" were headlined in big type. That famous definition of news will be recalled: "If a dog bites a man, that is not news; but if a man bites a dog, that is news." By the same token, if a Christian hates another, it is not news; but



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if a Christian forgives a great wrong, that is news. We talk glibly of Christian fundamentals. Forgiveness is the forgotten fundamental. The Sermon on the Mount exalts forgiveness; the model prayer accents forgiveness. In the famed parable of the prodigal son, forgiveness is the paramount issue. This great business of being Christian calls for the forgiving spirit, calls for it insistingly. As a final appeal, there upon the cross with the jibes and jeers of his enemies all about him, Jesus prays: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

So let me draw you to the great Forgiveness—
Not as one who stoops to save you,
Not as one who stands aside with counsel.
Nay, as one who says, "I too was poisoned with the flowers that sting, but now arisen,
I am struggling up the path beside you;
Rise and let us face these heights together."

To be sure, this matter of forgiveness and reconciliation admits of a far wider application than to individuals.

It applies to the various groups within Christendom—to communions, denominations, sects. The history of religious groups shows only too plainly the rancor, prejudice and ill will which so sadly mar the Christian witness. If all the ugly and false things that have been said by communicants of churches about other communions could be blotted out of mind it would be great gain for the spirit of true religion. Capital and Labor need to forgive and forget. The perpetuation of rancor between the two groups sadly hinders the progress toward a better understanding and delays an ultimate working basis that is necessary to brotherly relations and to economic prosperity. The great doctrine of forgiveness applies to races and to nations. It embraces color and class. It knows no bounds. There is much to forgive before international concord is attained. In place of the bitter speech and clenched fist, the jingoistic gesture and the rattle of the saber, must come the mind of Christ, the friendly handclasp, and the words and deeds of good will and sympathy. Sounds utopian? Of course it does, but it has worked miracles of understanding and forgiveness between individuals who have had the wisdom to try the experiment. It is common sense to test it and on a larger scale.

To forgive on Sundays and to hate on weekdays; to love only your class, your creed, your race, your family, your country, and stop loving and forgiving there, is to trifle with Christ's teaching and practice, is to fall pitifully short of the great business of being Christian. No one expects all Christians to see alike on myriad matters of no great importance, or even on points of doctrine, church polity, economics, politics and unimportant items of personal conduct. There will always be within Christendom conservatives and liberals, literalists and mystics, legalists and libertarians, Puritans and Cavaliers. Perhaps it is Christendom's gain that this is true; the important thing is that the great business of being Christian requires tolerance, understanding, forgiveness, longsuffering; in fine, inevitable love.

Jesus managed to get along successfully with a group of twelve intimates which numbered: a fiery political revolutionist; a dreamy, affectionate mystic; a volatile, explosive enthusiast; a slow-moving, slow-thinking, devoted martyr; a cautious, skeptically minded hero; a guileless and noble pietist; a thrifty, hardheaded businessman; and one misguided genius who proved a traitor, but not until his Master had endeavored to save him on the brink of his treason, and failing there, broke Judas' heart by a love that chose for him and for all, the death of the cross.

III

And there is the great business of standing for Christ's way of life in a world that regards his way as impracticable, visionary, utopian. For what did the Great Galilean stand? What were the ideals for which he lived and died? There is no mystery about this. These ideals, standards, principles are prominent on the pages of the little book we call the New Testament. In a world where but the few counted—the rich, the powerful, the learned—he taught that the many—the poverty-stricken, the undone, and the disinherited—counted. He spoke the parable of the lost sheep and told of the danger and discomfort which the shepherd endured to recover the one missing sheep out of his flock of a hundred. The night was not too dark or the way too dangerous to deter him. Thus he found the lost sheep and rejoiced. Reflect upon the statement of Jesus, "How much more is a man worth than a sheep?" The implications of these words are staggering.

In a world where hate was rampant, Jesus stood for the gospel of good will. Among a people who were intensely nationalistic, he was internationally minded. In a day of racial barriers, Jesus ignored the barriers or broke them down. Amidst war, injustice and iniquity he stood for peace, for justice, for righteousness. The great business of standing for Christ's way in this present age is exacting, difficult, unpopular. It is easier to compromise his teachings, explain them away, or take it out in praising them, and let it go at that.

Little wonder that the beloved Dick Sheppard of London, who so recently left us for the larger life, was moved to write a book entitled *The Impatience of a Parson;* or that John Haynes Holmes should preach on the topic, "If Christians Were Christians"; or that Dr. Fosdick should take for his theme "Is Christianity Possible?"; or that the late Professor Rauschenbusch should have selected as a title for a powerful little book the interrogation, "Dare We Be Christian?"; or that Mr. H. G. Wells should concede that the Nazarene is "too big for our small hearts"; or that Bernard Shaw should aver that Christianity has never been tried.

This troubled world awaits extraordinary human beings in this Christian sense of the term—men and women who are of extraordinary patience, courtesy, tact and courage; extraordinary justice, magnanimity and good will—human beings who keep on trying out these virtues, putting them to the test no matter how hard the going or how quixotic they may seem.

IV

Then there is the heroic business of self-control, the declaration of war on personal selfishness. The noblest men and women who have ever lived have felt obliged to renounce, not some little thing, but some great and appealing possession or relationship; and all because of the imperious call of duty. The sin of selfishness is at the root of all our troubles. In the nation, in the home, in the church, in politics and in industry, selfishness does its diabolical worst. When the prodigal son embarked upon his adventure in selfishness, his prayer to his father was: "Give me, give me, give me; give me money; give me the property; give me the goods now that should come to me by and by." But when the younger son had learned his hard lesson in the far country, and had come to himself, out of a chastened heart he framed a new prayer. He said: "Make me, make me as a hired servant; make me anything but what I was."

In Dr. Freeman's remarkable four-volume biography of Robert E. Lee the author reports a remark of General Lee that goes to the heart of things. It happened in the last years of the great Virginian's life. He was the president of a struggling college at Lexington, devoting himself to the youth of the south, helping to build them

into a noble citizenship of a reunited nation. People came from far and wide to visit the General, to clasp his hand, and look into his noble face. One day a woman brought her baby to him and requested him to take the child in his arms and bestow a blessing upon her little boy. General Lee took the child, bowed his head in silent prayer over the little fellow, and said to the mother, "Teach him to deny himself." Grander advice than this no one can give, although long ago Jesus gave this counsel by precept and practice. Was it not said of an heroic soul that he *forgot* himself into immortality?

Look at Kagawa in Japan, Schweitzer in Africa, Muriel Lester in London. Recall the men and women you know, all unknown to fame, who have serenely stood fast and resolute before the hard, difficult and often insidious temptations which confronted them, calmly choosing the rugged rule of the cross and counting it a joy. To them, and to all such, being Christian is not merely attending religious services, singing glorious hymns, employing eloquent symbols, but also translating the words and spirit of Christ to life here and now. Business? Yes, and magnificent business.

This grand business of being Christian is seldom a bed of roses, although there are exalted experiences that are more precious and enduring than the so-called prizes of life. Christ summons us to a crusade. "We are called to build temples, not to whittle sticks." It is not enough to admire Jesus, however extravagantly, or worship him however devoutly, but to follow him, which is more heroic. If it be said that his standards are too high and cannot be attained, there still remains the undimmed glory of the quest. It was Rubenstein who when a guest in New York City was asked by his host if he would like to attend a church service replied: "Yes, if you can take me to hear a preacher who will tempt me to do the impossible." The humblest preacher of the everlasting gospel who has captured the spirit and the essentials of the Christian faith and gives to them his highest loyalty, should be able to do that very thing—inspire his hearers to attempt the impossible.

Annually, at the anniversary of Jesus' birth, millions read Charles Dickens' "Christmas Carol." And it is well. In that immortal tale, mean, miserly Scrooge is dreaming dreams and seeing visions; and there appears to him the Ghost of his former partner, Jacob Marley, who in life had been as hard as nails and as stingy and mean as old Scrooge himself. Now from the world of shadows, Marley attempts to save Scrooge from the disaster that had overtaken him. As the Ghost wrings its hands and deplores the omissions and shortcomings of the life it had lived on earth, Scrooge manages to inject, falteringly, these words: "But you were always a good man of business, Jacob."

Marley's rejoinder supplies the perfect commentary on the great business of being Christian:

" 'Business!' cried the Ghost, wringing its hands again. 'Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, benevolence, were all my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!' "

And so it was.

The Platform of Christ And the Church

By Clarence E. Macartney

The glorious gospel of the blessed God. I Timothy 1:11.

IT is good for us from time to time to review the great principles upon which the church stands, the divine truths which have been committed to her custody, and to see whether or not the church is loyal to those truths. There are four great truths, or doctrines, which constitute the platform of the Christian church. These are: the Christian doctrine of man; Jesus Christ, the only Redeemer and the Son of God; the Atonement, or forgiveness of sins through faith in the crucified Son of God; and the coming of the Kingdom of God.

I. THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF MAN

Christianity is a remedy for man. It is not offered to a man who does not need it. It is not a superfluous remedy. Christianity is offered to a man who is a sinner, alienated from the mind of God, his whole nature dislocated and poisoned by sin.

Most of the corruptions of Christianity have their origin in the denial of this fundamental fact about man. If this be denied, it is only natural and logical that the true meaning of the other Christian doctrines, such as the person of Christ, the meaning of his death, and the destiny of man, should be altered accordingly. This state of man, the Scriptures declare, involves the loss of original righteousness, that is, the complete change of man's original nature, and with that the guilt and the power of sin. In this condition man can do nothing to deliver himself. He can educate himself, he can discipline himself, he can train himself, but he cannot change his nature. He cannot change his relationship to God. His sins have separated him from God.

This doctrine of man, although one of the most resented of the Christian truths, is in reality the highest conception of man, for it contemplates man as the prince of creation, created in the image of God, with the light of eternity in his eyes, endued with reason, affection and will. In his freedom of will, man chose to disobey God. Turned aside from his true relationship to God, man has ever since been in confusion and chaos. This alone accounts for man's strange history, his aspirations, strivings after something better, his dreams of an age of justice and of peace, and yet, at the same time, his crimes, abominations and cruelties. This alone accounts for the strange and amazing discords and disharmonies in man's nature; it accounts for Zacchaeus in whom there were at one and the same time the thieving publican and the "son of Abraham;" it explains the woman who was a sinner, a woman who lived a life of shame, and yet another woman who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head; it explains the two men of whom Paul spake, in constant civil war in his own breast, one who obeyed the law of the mind and the other who obeyed the law of the flesh.

This is a great mystery. The only explanation of it is the fact that man's nature has suffered dislocation, that man has fallen. When you look at him on one side you can say of man: "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god!" But when you look at man on the other side of his nature then you can exclaim with Pascal, that man is the glory and the shame of the universe.

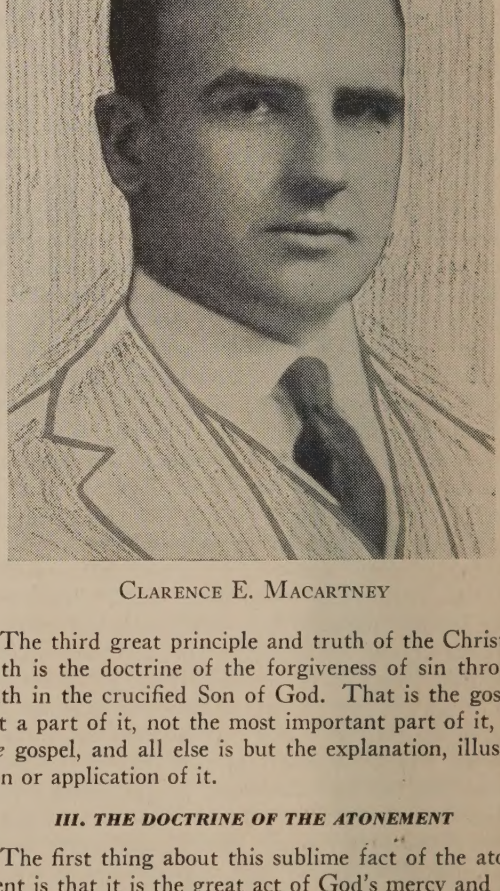
II. A DIVINE REDEEMER, JESUS CHRIST THE ETERNAL SON OF GOD

He is the One to whom all the prophets bear witness. He is the incarnation of God's great plan for a world's redemption. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. In the fulness of time God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, to redeem them that are under the law. These are incomparable and majestic facts, and they all depend upon a Redeemer who is the Son of God. Once when in college, I sat at a dinner alongside of the then president of Princeton University, Woodrow Wilson. After speaking of his father, who was a Presbyterian minister, and of the mission of the Christian church, he said, "The whole thing rests upon the fact that Christ is the Son of God." Would that all ministers and all Christians saw that as clearly as he did!

That Christianity presents to us Jesus Christ as the Eternal Son of God is an inescapable fact of the Scriptures. There is, first of all, the claim which Christ himself made to powers and to attributes which belong to God alone. He claimed pre-existence, for he said, "Before Abraham was I am." And he spoke of the glory which he had with God before the world was. He claimed omnipotence and said that all power was given unto him in heaven and on earth. He claimed to be the truth itself—"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." He challenged any of his foes to convict him of sin. He claimed an exclusive knowledge of God, saying, "No man knoweth the Father, but the Son." He claimed omnipresence, that he would be with his disciples to the end of the world. He claimed the right to forgive sin, which brought from the Scribes and Pharisees the indignant protest, "Who but God can forgive sin?" He claimed the right to judge men and to allot to them their eternal destiny. Who but a Divine Being could claim such powers?

Again, he directly and specifically declared that he was the Son of God. He did this when he asked the disciples what men said of him, and whom they took him to be, and then blessed Peter for his great answer, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God." He claimed to be the Son of God when he told the blind man whose eyes he had opened, and who had answered the question of Jesus, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" by saying, "Who is He Lord? that I may believe in Him?"—"Thou hast both seen him and he it is that speaketh with thee." The Jews took up stones to stone him, and when Jesus asked them for what good works they were going to stone him, they angrily replied: "For a good work we stone thee not, but because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." At his trial before the high priest, the high priest swept aside the whole mass of false testimony and came directly to the poin by asking Jesus himself whether or not he was the So of God, "I adjure thee by the Living God that tho tellest whether thou art the Christ, the Son of the Liv ing God," Jesus saith unto him, "Thou hast said."

"Aut deus aut non bonus homo"—"either God or no a good man." Christ is either the Son of God or he is th superlative knave and imposter of history. Upon thi Divine Christ who came into the world with a grea miracle, and having offered himself upon the cross fo our sins, was raised from the dead by another grea miracle, and who will return with all the power an glory of God, rests the whole truth of Christianity, th glorious gospel of the Blessed God.



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The third great principle and truth of the Christia faith is the doctrine of the forgiveness of sin throug faith in the crucified Son of God. That is the gospe not a part of it, not the most important part of it, bu *the* gospel, and all else is but the explanation, illustra tion or application of it.

III. THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT

The first thing about this sublime fact of the aton ment is that it is the great act of God's mercy and jus tice. God alone conceived and planned the salvation o man. He is, as the inspired writer nobly says, the Au thor and the Finisher of our faith.

This fact separates Christianity then from all man made schemes of salvation in which man, and not Go is the chief actor. It separates Christianity from th pagan religions; it separates it from the perversions o the gospel, such as the efficacy of penances, pilgrimage prayers to the saints; and from all schemes of natura religion, that is, salvation by character, by natural right

by good deeds. As John Ruskin somewhere has clearly and deeply written, "All the mistakes and heresies of religion arise from the effort of man to earn his own salvation, instead of receiving it from God."

The second vital truth in this doctrine of the forgiveness of sin, is the fact of the substitution of Christ for the sinner. What is most objected to and resented in any system is generally the most important thing in it. This is certainly true of the atonement, with its teaching that Christ made satisfaction to the broken law of God, the fact of his substitutionary suffering for the sinner.

This is declared to be the primary truth of the gospel. St. Paul writes to the Corinthians that Christ "died for our sins according to the Scriptures." That he died for our sins does not mean that in a vague general sense Christ died for man's good and benefit, but that he took the sinner's place, he bore the sinner's penalty and made satisfaction for the sins of man. This, it goes without saying, is a great mystery, into which even the angels desire to look. But the Bible reverberates with this teaching, and the whole work of Christ is summed up in the declaration he made when he lifted the cup at the Supper and said: "This cup is the New Testament in my blood which is shed for many for the remission of sin."

The result of this grand act of God in the death of Christ on the cross is that man's sin which separated man from God, is now put away. What the broken law demanded, what the holiness and justice of God demanded, has been done, and the sinner can return to God. Man's only part in this great work of reconciliation is to accept the pardon. That is what we mean when we say we are "saved by faith." Faith is the *means* by which we are saved, but not the *ground* of our salvation. The only ground of our salvation is the righteousness of Christ offered unto God for us on the cross.

IV. THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Ever since the fall of man there has been the echo of a great promise and the shining of a star of hope. This great promise and this beautiful hope is to be realized in the Kingdom of God.

The dying thief turned to Jesus in his last moments and prayed, "Lord Jesus, when thou comest in thy kingdom, remember me." The hope and the faith expressed in the prayer of that dying malefactor is an essential and glorious doctrine of true Christianity, and that is the fact that Christ will come to establish the Kingdom of God.

The thief was sure that the present state of that King, as he then saw him—naked, bleeding, reviled, forsaken, and crowned with thorns—was not the final state. So the believer today is certain that what we see as the condition of the Christian church, a church assailed ever by the world, surrounded and invaded by unbelief and by unrighteousness, and Christ by the many still neglected, and by the few enthroned, is not the final state of the church. It is the teaching both of reason and of revelation that Christ, who came in humility and died in solitude and shame upon the accursed tree, will one day come again in glory, when all opposition to him and to his kingdom shall be swept away, and God shall be all and in all. It will be a kingdom of glory, of peace, of purity, of good will and of heavenly joy, surpassing far the dreams and hopes of the sages, the rhapsodies of the prophets and the imaginations of the apostles.

These, then, are the broad foundations upon which stands the Christian church. These are the great and divine truths which alone afford hope for the soul and hope for the world. These are the truths which make up the glorious gospel of the Blessed God.

After Death

By Burris Jenkins

Today thou shalt be with me in paradise. Luke 23:43.

PERHAPS no one question has so persistently pressed for an answer in the human mind as the question, "What happens after death?" Where do we go? Is there a future life? If so, what is it like? These questions grow acuter with advancing years, as our friends one by one pass from us into the unknown. They take on an atmosphere of the deepest pathos when those whom we have loved most can no longer speak to us. It seems worth while, therefore, to ponder this age-old question once more and see if we can gain any information concerning our immortality.

Our age is not alone in pressing for an answer to the problem of life after death. The people who stood around the cross of Christ and heard him say to the repentant thief who hung beside him, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise," were speculating upon this subject, as their fathers had been, and as all nations in all times have done. The results of those speculations may be summarized briefly under several general heads, such as extinction, absorption, transmigration, probation, damnation and salvation.

Many have believed in all times, not merely in our own age, that death ends all, that we return to the earth from which we came and know nothing, see nothing, do nothing any more. Others have believed, notably in the far east, that we are absorbed into the infinite, flowing back into the original tide of being from which we were split off, and become again a part of the Eternal. Still others have thought that we pass from one life into another, that the soul of a human being may go backward and downward in scale to a tiger or a reptile, or may advance higher to inhabit the body of a prince or a great sage, and that upon our behavior in this life depends our destiny of rising or falling in the scale. Some have even held that our survival at all is conditional upon the kind of life we lead here and now. Still others have held that the period immediately after death is a period of trial, probation, purging our defects to render us fit for the paradise to which we are destined. Some are destined never to pass through this purgatory, but must remain in a state of eternal damnation. Still others successfully win their way to a blissful redemption and a complete salvation.

With varying shades of belief, these six ideas may be said roughly to comprehend the whole of human specula-

tion upon this subject. There is no final proof for any of them.

NO CERTAIN PROOF OF IMMORTALITY

Indeed, there is no demonstration that we shall ever live beyond the grave at all; no scientist or philosopher has ever succeeded in proving beyond any shadow of doubt the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Robert G. Ingersoll was entirely right in that most beautiful of all his orations, the little speech by his brother's coffin in Washington, when he said in a much quoted paragraph: "Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in the night of death, hope sees a star, and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing."

That's it. The great skeptic, when the hand of death touched those he loved best, could not but cling, like all the rest of us, to the hope and the dim groping faith that one day he should meet again those whom he had loved and lost. Like Lord Tennyson, he stretched lame hands of faith and could only faintly trust the larger hope. The closer death strikes to our side, the keener and more pathetic becomes our yearning for some light concerning what comes after death.

It is not surprising that there is pain and longing in the hearts of millions of men and women who have seen their best beloved pass behind the veil.

Is it any wonder that many of them engage in the most desperate attempts to bridge the chasm by consulting mediums, by waiting in darkened rooms for rappings and table-movings and ghostly communications of the dead? I cannot safely affirm that there is nothing to these so-called spirit manifestations. Indeed, the annals of psychical research contain many records which are not lightly to be rejected. Some of the greatest minds of our time have been vitally interested in these phenomena. But it seems to me far safer to leave all these attempts to bridge the chasm and to communicate with the dead in the hands of experts, psychologists, scientists, who have given their entire lives to such investigation. It is as dangerous for amateurs to dabble in these matters as it is to putter around in a chemical or an electrical laboratory. Better leave it alone. If William James and Hugo Munsterberg could not succeed in any satisfactory fashion in establishing these communications it is not likely that we, totally unschooled and unskilled, shall succeed where they failed. And all our cities are today filled with fakers and blood-suckers who for financial profit prey upon the pathetic longing of the bereft.

JESUS' WORD THE GREAT HOPE

Now the resurrection of Jesus and the teaching of Jesus is the strongest source of hope that we shall live again, or, rather, shall continue to live and never die, that there is in all history. The evidences for the resurrection of Jesus are much stronger than those for his virgin birth. All four of the Gospels tell of his resurrection; all the apostles and preachers and writers in the early church affirmed it as the foundation of their gospel. The church was built upon it, and the history and power of the church itself, growing and increasing through the centuries, is the strongest possible evidence of the resurrection.

Personally, I am not at all concerned about what became of the physical body of Jesus. That he was crucified, dead and buried, there can be no shadow of doubt. That on the third day afterward the heart that had lain still so long began to beat again, that the blood stream began to circulate again, that the chemical elements in the body began to ferment again, is beyond understanding and belief to those who have had any experience with human physiology. Of course, nothing but miracle could bring this about. I am not shortsighted enough, nor bullheaded enough, to deny the possibility of such miracle. Anybody who denies that a miracle can happen who affirms that he will not believe anything for which he cannot find a cause, is simply fifty years behind the times. In this age of wireless, of aerial navigation, of psychoanalysis, he who rears back on his haunches and declares he will believe in none of these things is like the proverbial ignoramus who, beholding a camel, declares, "There ain't no such animal." I don't know what became of the physical body of Christ. I don't know whether it was raised from the tomb or not. What is more, I don't care. That the body which appeared to his disciples was a different body, a celestial body, a sublimated body, the records seem to indicate.

COULD JESUS HAVE BEEN DELUDED?

What concerns me is that hundreds of his disciples were convinced beyond all shadow of doubt that they saw him and recognized him. That something startling and stupendous happened which was sufficient to account for the rapid rise of the Christian church and for two thousand years of Christian history, during which time Christianity has been the most powerful mental and spiritual force in human life—that much is enough for me to know. That he is alive today, all-powerfully alive, shaping the destinies of men and nations, giving them their most inspiring and uplifting hopes and ideals, building institutions whose foundations the battering tides of centuries cannot undermine and shake down, saving numberless poor wretches from the gutters, from self-destruction and from despair, to lives of usefulness, aspiration and radiant beauty— isn't that enough? It is the best attested event in all the tide of time and the most influential.

Now, what about the words of this man, who is so alive in our mortal affairs? Ought not those words, whatever they are, to have weight with us when he speaks concerning the life after death? As a matter of fact, they are the only words that ought to have weight with us at all, for he is the only one who has ever spoken with any degree of certainty and without the shadow of hesitation or doubt upon this subject. All his other words we have treasured and acted upon. We have built our institutions upon them. All that is best in our social structure is traceable to his ideals, and we are finding day by day, by practical application and experiment, more and more clearly the wisdom and value

of his utterances. He, then, whose words have been tested by two thousand years of human experience and have proved true to all that is best in human relations, could not have been mistaken or deluded upon this the most vital question that men ask themselves, "If a man die shall he live again?"

Nor is this a surrender of our reason. It is not a belief upon simple authority; for, look you, we reason that a man so wise, so true, so thoroughly informed upon everything that affects human destiny ought to know what he is talking about when he ventures to tell us about the ultimate destiny of mankind, and talks as if he does know, calmly, assuredly, finally and indubitably.

Burris Jenkins

He says, "Because I live, ye shall live also. I am the resurrection and the life. Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's palace are many apartments; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am there ye may be also. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Nobody had ever talked like that before him. Nobody has ever talked like that since. There are no ifs and ands, no "I thinks" nor "I hopes" nor "I believes." He does not undertake to prove it; he makes no attempt at demonstration. Neither does he undertake to prove the existence of God. There are some things too great to require proof, or to be capable of proof. A man wastes his breath and his time trying to prove that God is. You can't prove the contrary to humanity. They incurably believe in God. It is literally true that only the fool hath said in his heart "There is no God." So Jesus simply assumes that God is. In like manner he also assumes immortality. He says, in that simple matter-of-fact fashion of his, "If it were not so I would have told you." That is my unshakable ground of belief in immortality and eternal life.

INTIMATIONS FROM SCIENCE

It is altogether right and proper, however, that we should take into consideration every indication and intimation that he is speaking in harmony with the nature of things, to reinforce our faith and confidence in him. And there are such intimations of immortality. There is nothing more firmly established in our science than the laws of conservation of matter and of force. We know that no single atom in all creation can ever go entirely out of existence but can only change its form. We cannot burn up anything; we can only change it from a solid to a gaseous state. We can only send it up into the air in smoke to settle down again upon the earth in particles. Neither is any energy or force ever destroyed; it is only changed from one form into another, steam into electricity, electricity into light or music or x-rays. If this principle holds good of matter and force, is it not likely to hold good of that form of force which we call life?

Here is another intimation. Memory is the most distinctive thing about personality. My memory makes me the individual that I am, not my body. This body changes every seven years. Every atom in the brain is replaced by other atoms, and yet I can remember back seven times seven years with perfect ease. How do you account for that miracle? You cannot account for it. Is it at all likely, then, that so significant a thing as memory can ever perish? Is it believable that this stream of personality which persists normally unbroken for seventy, eighty and even ninety years, can ever be snapped off short at any one moment of time? Oh, I know there are lapses of memory, states of unconsciousness, sleep and anesthetics, injuries and abnormalities. Nevertheless the stream of human life is one long stream of memory, of personality. It is too vital a thing ever to be destroyed. The law of conservation of energy would seem to apply to it.

THE IDEA OF IMMORTALITY

Furthermore, the fact that the idea of unending life is so universal in all times and among all peoples would indicate that there is some foundation in fact for it. Ideas are the most real things in the world; they do not spring up spontaneously and without reality behind them. There is always a ground for an idea. I know that to some, indeed to whole races, the idea of unending life has been repugnant. They have wished for nothing else so much as extinction. Nevertheless the idea was there which is the thing I am trying to get at, the mere existence of the idea. How did it come to be there? It could not simply grow of itself. There must be reason for it, ground for it, foundation in fact for it.

I know this is not proof; it is only intimation. There is no proof except the word of Christ. What he says, our reason tells us is most likely to be the truth and we take him at his word.

Now comes the inevitable question, "What is that

future life like?" Nobody knows except Christ. He says it is good, that we ought not to be troubled about it nor afraid. And we know that whatever it is, it must be good. Maeterlinck knows that. All the pain, says Maeterlinck, belongs not to death but to life. All that is beyond the last breath, adds he, must of necessity be better than life itself. It is an end of pain, of travail and sorrow, of doubt and hesitation and fear. It is peace and rest and calm and reunion with those whom we have loved long since and lost a while. It is recognition of one personality by another.

We shall know each other there far better than we ever knew each other here. We shall see face to face and eye to eye and communicate without tongues of flesh and eyes of flesh and hands of flesh. Spirit with spirit will meet, and we shall be closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet.

There Is No Death

By Bernard C. Clausen

Death hath no more dominion over him. Romans 6:9.

WE face the day that has been dreaded by faithful men through all the Christian centuries. The resurrection of Jesus is under critical attack. We are not sure whether or not our faith can survive.

There have been serious conflicts before, but none more desperate than this. Through the years, scorn has been engendered by the betrayals of pitiful hypocrisy within the church, but we have survived these storms of contempt. When Galileo rearranged the starry universe and proved that the earth was not its all-dominating pivot and center, the faith of many was shattered and the future of the church was in doubt. But we lived through that experience. Only a few years ago, we were compelled to submit while the new science of psychology took apart the human mind and exposed its workings, for all to see. After that, it was still possible to be a Christian.

But deeper than all these experiences, was a dread which is now beginning to be realized. All of the Christian generations have trembled a little in anticipation of this day in which we live. For science is now coolly asserting, beyond any chance of successful contradiction, conclusions we have been warned to expect with saddest apprehension.

These expectations of trouble have been evident from the very first chapters of Christian life. Our fear discloses itself in the strenuous efforts put forth, even in earliest times, to guard the story of the resurrection from attack. Notice how large a proportion of the Gospel narratives is devoted to the details of it. See how carefully its outline is corroborated with explicit and legalistic demonstration of the evidence—the witnesses identified by name and precisely listed. Observe how every negative possibility which might be suggested was imagined and contradicted in advance. The Bible pages exhibit the insistent proof that Jesus was really dead, that he had suffered for tormenting hours the fatal agony of the cross, that after this time of torture he had been stabbed in the side, that water had flowed from his pierced heart, that his legs had been broken as a final assurance of his demise. Moreover the insidious rumor that disciples might have stolen his body was denied before it began to spread, with the detailed reports of the huge stone, the Roman seal, the centurion guards, and the bribe that was given the soldiers to induce them to say what they knew was not true—that Christ's dead form had been taken by stealth during the night by his friends.

RESURRECTION IN THE CREEDS

This special rallying of all available evidence to establish the fact of the resurrection is reflected in the creedal formulations which were devised to stiffen Christian resistance to any future assaults on our belief in it. As long ago as Paul's day, Christians were being taught to claim, "If Christ be not risen, then is our faith vain." The result was to rest the whole structure of his moral truth, the whole revelation of his prophetic insight, upon the event, with the implicit assumption that all he was and all he said would collapse without it. The early church taught its members to repeat, again and again: "I believe in Jesus Christ, crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell, the third day he rose again. . . . I believe in the resurrection of the body." Each time this solemn creed was repeated, it seemed more obvious that it represented an arch of faith from which no central stone like the resurrection could be removed without ruin for the whole towering structure. For centuries, this acceptance of a report of an event seemed much more important to Christians than any study of Jesus' own words concerning a heroic quality of fearless life, with its eternal significance based upon faith in God's undying love and his invincible purpose, open to substantiation by frank experiment in the reality of daily existence. Response to this challenge of Jesus' life and words was supposed to be impossible until one had subscribed as a necessary preliminary to a statement of belief in the resurrection.

But our enthusiasm for the resurrection can be observed as clearly in the preaching and the practice of the church through the ages. The greatest day of celebration in our sacred calendar is Easter Day. The crowds are greatest, the eloquence is most stirring, the music is happiest, the pageants are gayest, at Easter time. The most splendid pictures in Christian art, the most exultant hymns, the most moving sermons are those which have grown out of our faith in the conquest of Christ over death.

We have displayed our dread by this excess of enthusiasm. The theologians, the scriptural experts, the preachers, the institution of the church itself may all be detected in their fears, in their over-vociferous assertion of cloudless confidence.

THE TESTIMONY OF SCIENCE

But now the dreaded day has come, against which we have set up our defenses. For this battle we have been girding ourselves for centuries. In anticipation of our fate, thousands of believers have asked with bated breath,

"But what would happen to our faith, if anything happened to the resurrection?"

Meanwhile the world has become increasingly committed to the methods and conclusions of experimental science. We are proud of the achievements we have made by means of the calm, objective unemotional examination, discovery, analysis and arrangement of observed facts. By these means, we have arrived at a real mastery of the elements of our lives. We are sure that this is the way to learn truth in this puzzling world. We understand that there are beauties to be appreciated and wisdom to be gained by poetry, music, art and mysticism, which cannot be measured by science, yet even when led by these experiences, we do not dare to affirm what

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science coolly denies. We realize that science has not yet discovered everything, and that there are mysteries stretching out beyond its reach to date, but where science speaks, we yield. We now know that scientific scrutiny is not at present approaching the traditional doctrine of immortality, and yet we are conscious that the scientists are steadily reaching conclusions which have a direct effect upon our belief. And these conclusions we cannot escape or evade.

We are concerned, not because ministers or church people are supposed themselves to be expert scientists, but because we live surrounded by scientists and are compelled to think and to talk accordingly. Some churches may think they are secluded enough so that they need pay no attention at all. But every American boy and girl who goes to high school comes back with mind forever molded by science. Even the littlest village at the tiniest crossroad in America is dominated by it.

Once the whole world waited, tear-stained, eager to listen on Easter Day to the consolation of our faith. Now the whole world waits, with a sneer, for our Easter hymns, and anthems, and sermons, ready to scorn us if we produce foolish sentiment, insupportable generalities, pious evasions, while we utter our faltering teaching on the resurrection theme. Science has spoken to the world, and we cannot be oblivious to what science has said.

What happens to our faith when the biologist looks back over the whole vast pageant of life, and detects no break in the continuous ageless process, at which there might have been the miraculous insertion of some mysterious item called the immortal human soul? He sees humanity as slowly sloughing off the traits of the beasts; he sees in each human life a baffling recapitulation, combination and refinement of all the centuries of life which have gone before. He cannot bring himself to describe mankind as a special creation, a separate and final masterpiece of God's ultimate purpose in the starry infinities of the eternal universe. And when we listen to him, we falter a little as we try to say: "Eternal sons of God—there is no death."

DOES SCIENCE LEAVE ROOM FOR FAITH?

What conclusions are reached when the physiologist examines the human body as an individual entity? He marvels at these intricate and ingenious devices with which we hear and see, and live and breathe, and have our being. Yet he knows that these precious organs are gathered up into dust almost as soon as death comes, and that there is literally no chance for maintaining our physical constituents intact. He is not impressed with our pathetic attempts to postpone the gracious processes of nature with embalming and coffins and mausoleums, or to conceal those processes with flowers and gravestones. The guarded mummies of the super-careful Egyptians are scattered to the four winds with all their elaborate precautions rendered futile.

> Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay,
> Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.

How can we take the findings of convinced physiology and still repeat, "I believe in the resurrection of the body"?

Can we avoid the results when the psychologist looks into the life of the individual in mental experience? He notices that the intelligence is dependent upon complicated patterns of nerves and brain cells. One thought, diverted through a million inner channels, is affected and directed by the depth and width of the channels which were worn by our habits of mental response. Memory is the record of these tangled patterns; decision is the result of their combinations. A single serious conclusion may use as many wires and connections as all the telephone systems in the world could provide. Injure a part of the brain where some of these brain paths are, and the power to think those thoughts is gone. Shatter a section where a sense faculty reports, and that sense is ruined, though eyes and ears be still intact. At death, all these pathways are suddenly and completely destoyed. With them goes all chance of individual mental life. Our faith, to the student of the human mind, seems

like a desperate will to believe, against the force of logic —like the ancient defiance which frightened men offered Copernicus and Darwin. With the brain absorbed into the waiting earth, how can men expect to remember, to enjoy, to recognize each other, after death? So speaks the psychologist. Those who have trusted in religion, when they first begin to understand, are tempted to despair. How dare we go on claiming, "There is no death"?

THE REAL LINE OF ATTACK

Yet in our black despair, we are now making an astonishing discovery. All this fierce battle which we have been dreading to fight may not be our battle at all. Our eagerness to gird ourselves for defense may have taken our attention from the real line of attack. Our earnest teaching, by ceaseless repetition, of a creed, may have diverted our minds from the realities of faith. The things that Jesus taught about the life after death stand firmer than ever, untouched by all this controversy. Why should we be concerned about anything else?

When the biologist finds no break between my life and all of life which has gone before, he not only concludes that everything that has gone before is a part of me; he also attests that I am a part of all that comes after me. What my life does, counts in the eternal struggle of upreaching life. If I am beastly, I push life back toward the beast. If I am Christlike, I draw life upward toward his life. This life of mine, for better or worse, goes on, in all of life forever. What Christian could ask more than that from the biologist? In the deepest possible sense—there is no death!

When the physiologist takes from me the expectation of an inviolate physical body, he goes on to insist that nothing that was me is ever to be really lost. No physical matter is ever destroyed. No energy is ever exhausted; no moral thrust ever dies. Downward, and upward—what we choose lives forever. Ancient men might have cherished the hope of preservation for lips and limbs in a dark pyramid—Christians can learn to rejoice in the kind of survival that comes to a Johnny Appleseed, who plants fruit trees across miles of midwestern America and dies never having tasted their fruit, but happy in the anticipation of the unborn generations and their surprised enjoyment. What Christian, trained in self-sacrifice, would dare demand that he be personally rewarded? Enough recompense for him that as life absorbs his life, there is no death for all that was good in him and in his striving for the good. The sting of death is sin. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory. Be ye therefore steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the works of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. There is no death!

THE TREASURES OF TRUTH

When the psychologist announces that, with the brain gone, my mind cannot continue as a separate mind to function, he still admits that what truth I discovered, or proclaimed, or clarified, or embodied, need never be lost again. It is the genius of humanity to accept and remember, and to build the future upon the treasures of truth which others have sought and found. My errors, my false judgments, my cowardly concealments, my careless deceptions—these too survive a little while to plague life and to furnish me my hell. But the bold affirmation, the clear processes of honest thought, the glimpse of intellectual and spiritual beauty, these give my soul release from death, forever. Whether identified with me by name or not, for all the truth I have ever discovered and obeyed, there is no death! This truth lives as help for all men, forever.

> Though thou shalt die, these the immortal forces
> That meet to form thee live forever more.
> They hold the suns in their eternal courses
> And shape the long sand grasses on the shore.
> Be calmly glad, thine own true kindred seeing
> In fire and storm, in flowers with dew empearled.
> Rejoice in thy imperishable being,
> One with the essence of the boundless world.

Of this eternal life, Jesus was the first fruits. He lives, in the vast pageant of human history, inseparable from that verdict of triumph which he claimed for us and for all who would love his kingdom. He lives, in the inner comradeship of struggling souls, bringing shame for unworthiness, and courage for lonely hours. He lives, in the mighty heritage of liberating truth, even when men follow his truth without knowing or acknowledging his name. *He lives.* "The excellent does become the permanent." This is the victory that overcometh the world.

Death hath no more dominion over him. And because he lives, you, too, shall live.

There is no death.

The Best Of All Human Dreams

By Samuel Harkness

. . . that they might have life, and that more abundantly. John 10:10.

EASTER is consecrated to the dazzling triumph of Jesus over death. More people will attend services of worship today than upon any other Sunday of the year. Everywhere altars are drifted with lilies and choirs are singing alleluias. But for many the idea of immortality swims in the ether of imagination, like Aladdin's palace, without rational support. And despite a cultural realism which catalogues such a belief with fairy tales, they wish it might be true and think it ought to be true. The unspoken litany of Easter is "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

And it may be said that the thought of immortality superimposed without reference to congruity upon human experience is indeed incredible. Jesus did not entertain such a conception. He believed that immortality is a normal outgrowth of life—life with ever-expanding horizons and enriching meanings—and that every man ought to be able to say "I am the resurrection" before he looks the physical experience of death in the face. That is what he means by life more abundant. And that is

why he gave incentive to this the best of all human dreams.

We share this dream of life more abundant even though we are confused and uncertain as to its fulfillment. Our confusion and uncertainty exist because we have sought to interpret life more abundant in terms of progress, wealth, education and strategy, and have not yet been able to banish chaos and despair.

We are familiar with that progress which is no more than a feverish search for added comforts and new excitements, with that wealth which carries inevitable concomitants of social tyranny, with that education which teaches how to do better the incidental, the futile and even the wrong things, and with that strategy which is more anxious for economic security than human emancipation. It becomes increasingly obvious that in attempting to reach the goals of civilization and culture by such means we have succeeded only in achieving a social order in which brutality is more subtle and vulgarity more tolerable. The Pauline theology found no solution for the clotted cruelties of the time in which it was formulated but was content to declare, "Our citizenship is in heaven." We dare not let ourselves off so easily for we are very sure that immortality is an heroic and dearly bought consequence as are also intelligence and character and good will.

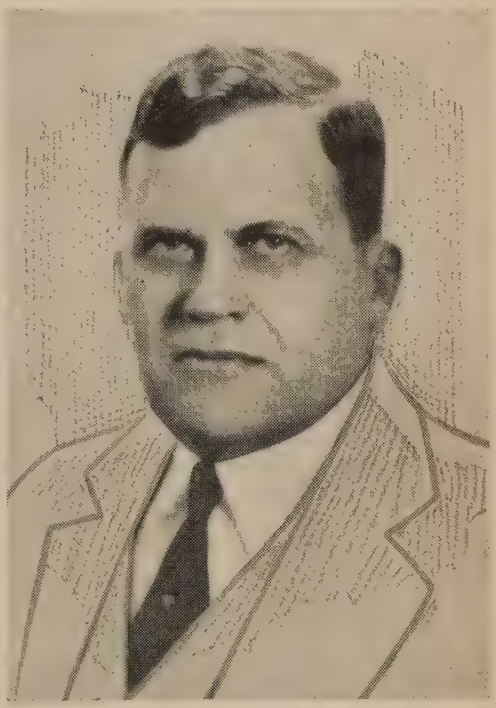
NO LIFE ABUNDANT BY PROXY

Upon this Easter morning, therefore, with so much tragedy just behind us and so much menace stalking the world, let us see that our hope of life to come cannot be dissociated from what we make of the life that now is, and that while we may read some roaring tale of the sea like "Mutiny on the Bounty" in slippered ease we cannot have this adventure of life more abundant by proxy. Life more abundant must be spiritually interpreted in each person's experience; how else can he say, "I, too, shall have an Easter"? The Easter story read from the pulpits today is the direct and unique climax of the unequivocal religion of Jesus. His discrimination and forthrightness, his disregard of penalties which might accrue, and his tireless sympathy entitle him to the unmeasured triumph the Scriptures proclaim. As the late president of Princeton, Dr. Patton, used to say: "The conviction is forced upon us that this man could not help but rise from the dead."

Here we issue upon the realization that life more abundant must be absolute in integrity. Unlike Jesus, ethical passion with us is forever in conflict with prudential considerations. We would like to be good but we also want to be safe. Thus we achieve only a synthetic goodness which cannot be insured against collapse. Like Adam—"The woman tempted me and I did eat"—we calmly explain that we have sinned because the pressure was too great. Nor do we expect any ostracism to be inflicted when the explanation is made.

We hate war but build at staggering cost more potent weapons with which to wage it. We hate poverty and ignorance and disease but permit social processes which make them inevitable. We hate betrayals in human relationships but refuse the spiritual disciplines which make them impossible. In theory we agree that integrity must be absolute while in practice we allow it to become relative. We forever contradict ourselves by attempting to live in two worlds, one of pious pretense and the other of dubious practice, at the same time. And all the while we have the uneasy feeling that thereby life is made sour and sterile. Is a world in which integrity is not absolute fit to inherit immortality?

Life more abundant is positive in love. Mr. Albert L. Scott, chairman of the Laymen's Missionary Inquiry, told me that in Japan he asked a Buddhist what were the characteristics of the Christian as he had observed him. The Buddhist answered: "He does not smoke, he does not drink, he does not gamble, and he does not go to the brothel." "But," expostulated Mr. Scott, "has



SAMUEL HARKNESS

he no positive characteristics?" And the Buddhist said, "None that I have observed." Life more abundant does not consist of negatives alone. It is daybreak thrusting across the shadowed landscape of human discouragement, moral purpose integrating man's confused desires, affectionate concern attacking whatever debilitates him whether it be loneliness or fear or shame. Whenever men "pass by on the other side," they have lost the essence of religion no matter how clerical their garments.

That lesson was taught quite vividly in Galilee a long while ago. Love is not tardy in recognition of the best, love does not shrink from self-realization of the best, nor does love fail to share the best. But socialization of the best does not mean that we must make others think exactly as we think. Sometimes the ideas even of good people are not very sound, and much heroic action has issued in absurd and vicious results because it was animated by unsound ideas. The Crusades with all their glamor were morally unjustified and Peter the Hermit

was a worse enemy of childhood than the Pied Piper of Hamelin. We have had too much coercion and too little creative cooperation in the promotion of goodness. To call forth the best in each and weld it into something representative of all proves that love is courteous as well as fervid.

But love in life more abundant comes to full glory in forgiveness. The unforgiving spirit cannot enter the kingdom of God in time or eternity. Easter could not help but grace the life that cried from the red depths of its agony, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." If we could bring that cry down from the cross into the grim areas of racial and economic struggle, sanity and sympathy would govern the hearts of men.

THE GREAT DREAM WITHIN

Life more abundant is ultimate in hope. In Florida I walked through an orange grove and observed a tree whereon blossoms and green and ripened fruit were all growing—a complete cycle of life. But man is not satisfied to find immortality in the institution he has built, or the book he has written, or in the children who bear his name into the years. In him, achievement is overshadowed by anticipation, reminiscence by prophecy, and he thinks of himself as "marching on" in his own originating and perceiving self.

Despite the handicaps of circumstance and imperfections of nature, he weaves the drama of his life about the theme of high expectancy and refuses to stage it within the doll-house of any philosophy which makes him spiritually Lilliputian. He may be frightened by the vastness of the universe in which he lives, bewildered by the pain it can inflict, and mocked by his own physical identity with the beasts of the field, but nevertheless something within him

> shakes its banner free,
> Cries like a captain for eternity.

And the saga of civilization, marred though it is by persisting fear, greed and deceit, is sufficiently magnificent to vindicate him. If he can

> Move upward, working out the beast,
> And let the ape and tiger die,

who shall deny him an achievement equal to his imagination? Surely not a righteous and loving God.

KNOWING GOD BY HEARSAY NOT ENOUGH

It is related of Thomas Carlyle that when a new minister was called to the parish in which he lived a conversation was held concerning the religious needs of the parish. Said Carlyle, "What this parish needs before everything else is a preacher who knows God otherwise than by hearsay." Emerson put the same idea even more forcefully when he adjured a ministerial audience to have "a firsthand acquaintance with Deity."

The man in the pulpit may be suspected of being glib about God, distending the toy balloon of his knowledge with the wind of pretentious speech, but I have this firsthand acquaintance with Deity. I have seen him in many people I have known. He enters so intimately into human experience that it is increasingly difficult for me to say where the boundaries lie which separate the human from the divine. God intermingles in ratio as like spiritual essence in man allows so that the miracle of the Word becoming flesh is forever happening.

If God and man can find identity in like spiritual essence, sharing in holy conscience, redemptive purpose and sacrificial action, shall they not also share eternity? In our daily lives, we constantly take for granted what men once said was impossible. Who shall say that those who dedicate themselves to the absolute in integrity, the positive in love, the ultimate in hope, and dwell in like spiritual essence with God, may not cry out at the last, "O death, where is thy sting, and grave thy victory?" So let us

> Sail forth—steer for the deep waters only,
> Are they not all the seas of God?

Who Are You?

By Charles X. Hutchinson, Jr.

WHEN the funeral train of Abraham Lincoln stopped at Albany on its way from Washington to Springfield, the cortege passed through the streets of that city. Crowds gathered along the line of march, and at a strategic point stood a Negro mother with her small son in her arms. As the casket of the Great Emancipator passed, she lifted her son as high as she could reach, and was heard to say, "Take a long look, honey. He died for you."

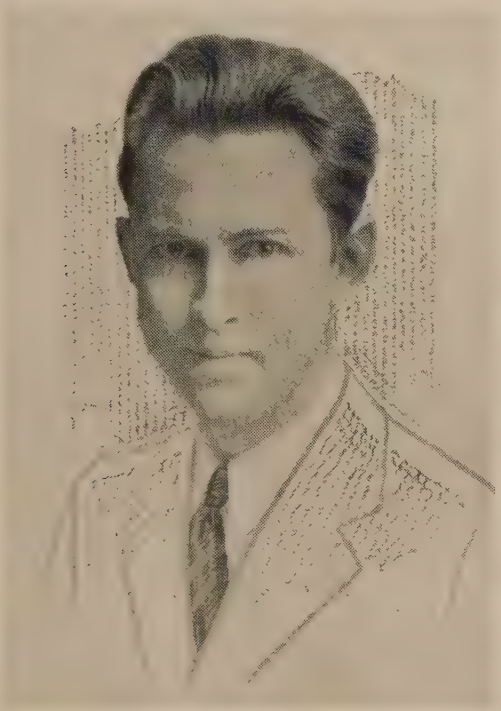
During Holy Week we take a long look at Jesus who died for us. We see him as he sets his face like a flint to go to Jerusalem. We see him who, "when he had sung a hymn, went out into the Mount of Olives, and passed over the brook Kedron into the Garden of Gethsemane" where he completely surrendered his will to God's will. We see him of whom it is written, "Ah, was there ever loneliness like his! From the drear garden of his agony the sinless one was led. His followers all forsook their Lord and fled. No gentle tone; no kindly glance was there! But mocking faces, and harsh words of hate; the cruel soldiers; the unpitying crowd! Despised of men, rejected and forsaken! Ah, was there ever loneliness like his!" We see him who endured the cross and despised the shame rather than lend himself to the great betrayal.

And after taking a long look at him, we turn to scrutinize ourselves to see what manner of men we are, remembering that personal loyalty to him means that we shall be like him. We discover that we are as diverse and contradictory as life itself. We are not simply dual personalities of the "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" variety. There are so many different men striving for mastery in our lives that we can hardly keep up with the procession. We see one man in the home, and he is likely to be very different as a husband, a father, and a companion. We see another man at work, and he is distinctly different in dealing with his employees and with his customers. At the golf club and in other social

relationships he is quite another fellow. And when he is in church it is difficult for those meeting him at work or at play to recognize him at all. So we ask advisedly, "Who are we?"

THE MAN THE WORLD SEES

There is the man the world sees and judges. It is a snap judgment to be sure that the rank and file of people pass on us, but as far as they are concerned we are the people they think we are. I find myself passing judgment on radio personalities, especially preachers. By the tone and inflection of their voices quite as much as the content of their discourses I judge them. I even see them in my imagination, and decide whether or not



CHARLES X. HUTCHINSON, JR.

I should like to listen to them Sunday after Sunday. I decide whether the leader of "Morning Devotions" has made adequate preparation, or just lazily pulled something out of the file.

It is my privilege to minister to a summer congregation with hundreds of visitors stopping at our church every season. Week after week I look out on a congregation that makes me feel like a stranger in my own pulpit. But when that congregation of strangers moves out of the sanctuary, they have formed a judgment on my preaching and on me, and as far as they are concerned I am the man and the preacher that they think I am.

There is the man the world sees and judges.

THE MAN AS SEEN BY HIS FRIENDS

We are different people to our friends than to the world at large. We call them friends because they choose to believe the best about us. They give us the benefit of the doubt in any questionable situation; they seek to understand us when we are misunderstood on every side; they know our aspirations as well as our achievements and for that reason they are much more generous in judging us than our casual acquaintances. And we are grateful.

Think of the allowances a good wife makes for her husband, or a mother makes for her children! She will discover virtues aplenty that are not there. Or consider that young couple sitting in the back pew of the church, enjoying their courtship, oblivious to almost everything that is going on, including the church service. Some interested observer in a near-by pew may say, "I wonder what she sees in him." You may be sure that she sees something in him which nobody else in the church sees. She loves him!

There is the man who is seen by his friends, and he is the man they think him to be as far as they are concerned. And he is a very different man from what the world sees and judges.

THE MAN AS HE KNOWS HIMSELF

Every man knows himself to be quite a different person from what even his most intimate friends think him to be. We not only know what we do and what we think and how we feel, but we know why we do what we do, and why we think what we think, and why we feel as we feel. One of our most helpful exercises is a periodic checkup on the *why* of our conduct and thought. We often discover mixed motives that make us a little ashamed, and on occasion we have a pang of conscience when the conviction comes that our friends think more highly of us than we deserve. Or again we wish they knew our motives a bit more clearly so that they would be more generous in their judgment. The point is that a man knows himself to be a different fellow from what even his most intimate friends think him to be.

In a college town in the middle west, an old man roamed the streets during my college days. He lived in penury. He was unkempt. On occasion he was a pitiable sight. His only vice was the purchase once a week of a five-cent bag of chocolate creams which he placed on the mantle in his home and used most temperately—one a day! If you were a very close friend you might get one, but if you took it you felt as though you were robbing the old man of a day's pleasure. "He is a professor emeritus to be sure, but what does he get out of life?" asked the neighbors. Their judgments were sometimes harsh. All they saw was an old, old man, run down at the heel, who was penuriousness personified. And there was no good reason for it! What they did not know was the motive of the old professor in living the way he did. They did not know that he had been willing to deny himself anything and everything for years to the end that he might save enough out of his very meager income to give to the university that he loved and the astronomy students of many succeeding generations one of the largest telescopes in the world. Nor did he have any thought of perpetuating his own memory. He did not care to have the astronomical observatory which his years of sacrifice made possible bear his name. Rather he wanted this inscription to appear,

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." The old professor knew himself to be a different man from what his neighbors thought him to be, or from what his intimate colleagues on the faculty knew him to be. He knew *why* he lived as he lived.

One of the most important questions a man can ask himself is this, "The more perfectly and intimately I am known, am I more of a man or less of a man?" In other words, in the privacy of our own lives do we know ourselves to be bigger or smaller folk than the members of our family think we are? And in the intimacy of our family relations are we bigger or smaller folk than the world at large in making a snap judgment thinks us to be? That is an important question.

THE MAN GOD KNOWS

But there is another question more pressing, and that is whether or not we are seeking to discover still another man, a more important man, the man that God knows. God is pleading to be let into our lives, because he sees beyond the man that is to the man as he has potential possibilities to become. God sees Peter in Simon, and Paul in Saul, and he is saying to every man ready to listen, "Within you there is more than you know, even though it be buried and unrealized." And he is constantly holding us up to *that more*.

S. H. Hadley tells graphically the discovery of *that more* in his own life: "One Tuesday I was sitting in a saloon in Harlem, a homeless, friendless, dying drunkard. I had pawned or sold everything that would bring a drink. I had not eaten for days, and for four nights I had suffered with delirium tremens from midnight till morning. I had often said, 'I will never be a tramp. I will never be cornered. When the time comes, I will find a home in the bottom of the river.' But when the time did come, I was not able to walk a quarter of the way there.

"Along toward evening it came into my head to go to the Jerry McAuley mission. The place was packed, and it was with difficulty that I made my way to the space near the platform. McAuley arose and told his experience. I found myself saying, 'I wonder if God can save me?' Then I listened to the testimony of twenty or thirty others, every one of them saved from rum. I made up my mind that I would be saved too, or die right there. When the invitation was given I knelt down with a crowd of drunkards. What a conflict was going on for my poor soul! Something within me said, 'Come.' Something else said, 'Be careful.' I hesitated for a moment, and then with a breaking heart I cried, 'Dear God, can you save me?' Never can I describe what happened.

"Up to that moment I had been filled with utter darkness. Now the brightness of noonday seemed to stream around me. I was a free man again."

What happened? S. H. Hadley discovered a new man, the man that God knew. And that new man became a power, for he found God as a source of power sufficient to make him over into a son. "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

Holy Week was Jesus' supreme testing time. It should be nothing less for us. As we take inventory of ourselves, seeing ourselves in our casual daily relationships, in our more intimate associations, and in the privacy of our own solitude, how do we measure up? To what extent have we fulfilled the high promise that God sees and knows is in us? Let us look at Jesus and use him as our scale of value and achievement. "Take a long look. He died for you."

I Believe in Immortality

I BELIEVE in the survival of human personality because I believe that the universe is sufficiently intelligent to preserve its highest values. Truth, beauty, love and goodness—these are values which ought to be conserved. On this point there is, I take it, no difference of opinion. But how can they be conserved unless certain gallant and gracious personalities are preserved? Where do these supreme values reside? Only in persons and in personal relationships. . . . The only way the universe can preserve its supreme values is to preserve human personality. Will it be so? I cannot prove, but I believe, that it will.

ERNEST FREMONT TITTLE.

IF Jesus is right in his teaching about divine Fatherhood, immortality follows as a matter of course. This is the foundation of the Christian hope. It depends upon the purpose of God. Jesus gave us not only a new fact, but a new value. The Christian hope stands or falls on Christian experience.

WILLIAM ADAMS BROWN.

HERE and now, our misfortune is irreparable. Our service to others is limited. Our thirst for larger activity is unsatisfied. The greatest workers for the race are at times shaken with a mighty cry of the soul, a longing more fully to body forth the energy, the fire, the richness of fancy and of human impulse which overburden them. What wonder, then, that we with our more limited senses and more humble powers should with a passionate desire crave wider range and scope of usefulness!

HELEN KELLER.

I BELIEVE in immortality because Jesus taught it and believed it. This is all the proof I need. That is the basis of my knowledge and the beginning and end of all argument.

CHARLES M. SHELDON.

MANIFESTLY the soul is as immortal as the moral order which inhabits it, else morality were a mockery. Frail we are, and fleeting, but in their outworking the laws of the moral and spiritual life reach far beyond life and time and death, and become prophets of a life that shall endless be.

JOSEPH FORT NEWTON.

WE are here. Some Power has called us out of the unknown. We did not come of our own wills. Some Higher Power has evolved it all. And the Power that has caused this revelation of wonder and mystery can

easily have prepared for us another surprise beyond the locked mystery of death. And I believe that this stupendous Power we call God has created another world, a world of spirit for the spirit of man.

EDWIN MARKHAM.

FAITH in a future life is progressively verified by an expanding spiritual experience in the present. The present life, if it be truly spiritual, is eternal.

SHERWOOD EDDY.

I BELIEVE that Christ turned a brilliant guess into a solid certainty and endowed the hope of eternal life with grace, reason and majesty.

HUGH ELMER BROWN.

Is it reasonable to suppose that the "accident of death" means an end to the nobler powers? It is far easier for me to believe than not believe in immortality.

MARY E. WOOLLEY.

NOBODY has ever proved that personality survives after death. But if personality does not survive, then there are innumerable facts of life, and these the highest and most beautiful realities of human experience, which are inexplicable, as myriads of biological facts are inexplicable if evolution is not true. Seeing these facts as real, we seek an hypothesis, a speculation if you will, to explain them; and as Darwin and his confréres found evolution, so man finds immortality. It is an idea which we believe to be true because it is the only conceivable explanation of facts which we know to be real. It is from this point of view that I insist that the thought of immortality is as well founded as any other well authenticated postulate of the human reason. The basis of our faith is not theological, but scientific.

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES.

MY REASON demonstrates these propositions: The human soul is a spiritual and indivisible substance; therefore, it is incorruptible; therefore, it could cease to exist only through annihilation by its Creator—a contingency which is more than improbable. History assures me that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, demonstrating that his soul did not perish when separated from his body. The resurrection proves that Christ was God. Therefore, he spoke with knowledge and with truth when he declared that the souls of men live after death. Hence my belief in immortality is not wishful faith or trust. Fundamentally, it is intellectual.

JOHN A. RYAN.

BELIEF that death ends all involves belief that personality is a transient result of physical particles aimlessly organized. It involves also the idea that since this earth is a temporary affair, which once was not here, and some day will be uninhabitable, mankind in the end will totally vanish with all the fruits of its struggle and sacrifice. I cannot myself submit to the mental confusion, the triumphant irrationality of existence where death finally is the victor over all.

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK.

WE CANNOT escape the belief and conviction that inevitably "this mortal shall put on immortality" with no loss of that which here on earth belongs to personality and character. JAMES L. BARTON.

A Pastoral Prayer

BY FRANK HALLIDAY FERRIS

ONCE AGAIN we are met in this hospitable room, folk of many families who through the week walk our several ways but once a week gather here to unite our hearts and blend our voices in prayer and praise. Some are here from force of habit; some perchance as a tiresome duty or act of condescension; others, it may be, drawn by some nameless need, seek here what they have been unable to find elsewhere; others are come because they love to be here, because to them there is no music so sweet as the songs of Zion, no hour of the week so satisfying as this when they can have about them a company of Christian folk, can humbly and reverently bow before their Maker.

Here Thou seest, O Lord, all sorts and conditions of men: youth with its troubled dreams or savage cynicism, mid-life with its faded idealism or hard realism, age with its prophetic faith or dull, gray resignation. Some of us have won success and are tempted to pride; some have met with failure and are tempted to despair. All types of mind, all degrees of culture and development, pilgrims at every stage of the journey, we come here to rest our souls on Thee, to raise our pilgrim song ere we resume our climbing way.

We bless Thee that while our love for Thee has tides that ebb and flow, Thy love for us is ever at the full; that though in our varied preoccupations we often forget Thee, the Lord is mindful of his own, he remembereth his children. We thank Thee for the faith that keeps us faithful to the highest we know, so that we cannot long rest in any easy second-best, but however often we falter and fall must arise to renew our ever-failing but never-ceasing quest of perfection. We thank Thee that we can admire moral beauty in others, can rejoice in the joys of others with spirits envy-free.

Forgive us our base ingratitude, our smug acceptance of Thy gifts as though they were ours of right and not of grace; our weak amiability, which is often another name for moral cowardice; our attitude of easy fatalism toward our own besetting sins, our uncharitableness toward the sins of others. Forgive us the low hankerings we can hardly forgive ourselves.

Give to each one the gift of Thy grace which he most needs: healing to those who are hurt; light to those in darkness; comfort to the lonely and sad; courage and strength to us all. Teach us how to live, how to love, how to hope, despite the tramp of the heavy years. Stir within us new yearnings, new desires.

Our Master, once more we make Thy faith our prayer: "Thy Kingdom come! Thy will be done on earth!" Amen.

Wanted: An Intimate Youth Group in Every Manse

By Allan A. Hunter

HERE and there over the country are young people with a religious bias who are against war and for social justice. They can occasionally be found on the picket line. "If 1917 comes again," some of them will be found in jail.

"What we want," they will confess late at night when the lights are out and the grate fire makes them especially communicative, "what we want is not just a set of ideals or even a plan of action, desperately important as these are. What we want is to count for something, to know that we are really doing something effective toward the kingdom of God. We aren't asking to be big shots. At least we don't think that's what bothers us. We are asking to be connected with the wires that have high voltage going through them and that are leading in the right direction." Their number is not impressive but their sincerity is; and our churches would do well to give them special encouragement.

● *A Fellowship That Meets Definite Needs*

For several years in my home I have met regularly once a week with a small group of such restless but earnest youths. The personnel changes but the idea continues. Some of them come from a distance to enjoy this fellowship which seems to meet a definite need—at least for a while. A few groups have sprung out of this original one, which suggests that the method may be worth trying in other churches.

The technique is something like this. The minister, sensing that five or six young people of his acquaintance are looking for more comradeship and dynamic than they get in the usual services, invites them to his home to talk over possibilities. He faces them with the fact that they are not satisfied with their lack of drive. If they are what they appear, really vital young people, they will readily admit their sense of spiritual need. From then on the way is relatively easy. "Well, then, why not start a group, right here? We have the material. It takes only three or four to begin. You can make yourselves at home here in the manse every Tuesday evening, say, in front of this fire. If what you get out of this quest together is real it will spread. If it doesn't spread it's dead and you can look elsewhere for what you want."

The group is now under way. They can discuss social issues that concern them: what can be done in the community to win support for some urgent peace bill in Congress; how to get the "Y" to allow colored students to swim in the pool; when a meeting should be arranged to give both sides of a certain strike situation the chance to say their say; whom if anybody should be backed up in the coming municipal election; whether anything can be done on the campus about drinking.

● *Airing Some Common Problems*

It is late. The lights are turned off. Everybody sits on the floor and looks at the fire in the logs that depends on

Allan A. Hunter

several of the logs finding the right relationship to each other. Personal confidences are almost inevitable. A fraternity member frankly admits that he finds it hard to believe there is a God with whom you can have personal relationship. The girl who gave up her chance at college so that she could take care of her invalid mother recalls how she felt that way once herself, but she doesn't worry about that problem now; in fact she finds it natural and necessary to pray. But what, interrupts another, is prayer? Perhaps, surmises the minister, this that we are doing is prayer.

These young people may not put it this way, but what they secretly crave is the discipline, the habits giving a sense of power that will pull them in the right direction. They have contempt for the bayonet practice and the usual routine motions drilled into the nervous systems of the R.O.T.C. boys. Because of a scruple that the end does not justify the means and that mass murder or lying is wrong even in behalf of the workers, they cannot accept the regimen of the communists, challenging and attractively exacting as that regimen often appears. But they sense the value of having something stiff and regular to do, agreed upon and practiced by each member of the group. You can keep on with something difficult every morning and every evening if you know that certain friends are doing the same thing and counting on you not to break their morale by lapsing.

One reason why religion seems to some gifted young people to be so lacking in bite is that we hand it to them on a silver platter. They instinctively recoil from silver platters. But they will often go eagerly after the real thing, if it demands enough of them; if it is like the snow upon a mountain summit that may break their necks to reach. This fact of repressed heroism which is there all the time "like a brook that is under the ground," can be candidly acknowledged before the grate fire. Then a few simple rules leading away from the soft life can be decided upon as a beginning. Here are some which a few small groups try to live up to:

● *Paths to Strength and Poise*

1. Before going to sleep, hang up your worries and let yourself rest back in the presence of God. Muriel Lester suggests saying, just before dropping off, "Into Thy hands I commit my spirit."

2. First thing upon awaking, turn your mind not upon yourself but upon God. To quote Muriel Lester again, think of God as "shining beauty, radiant joy, creative power, all-pervading love, perfect understanding and serenity." Not many days are required to cultivate this skill.

3. Before breakfast, commit the whole day to God. The next sixteen hours belong not to petty egocentric purposes but to the greatest cause there is. Worry, therefore, which is a symptom of selfishness should more and more pass out of the picture and energies that hitherto have been choked up should now begin to flow since there is a channel for them to flow down.

4. Think of each member of the group as actually *in the presence* of

God and through the day living up to the best that is in him. Later in the day when your resistance is down, it gives you extra strength to recall that a few hours before you have been thus committed to the highest you know by each one of these special friends. The reinforcing pressure of such fellowship seems to give a tone that is not easy to achieve alone.

Of course every group should work out its own rules. But some equivalent for rule number four is indispensable. Even for those who doubt telepathy, this type of intercessory prayer is reasonable. After all, if only for an instant each day you think of a person as being on the level where he is becoming what he could be, the chances are you will exert yourself to help him realize some of his possibilities. If each member of the group is imaginatively and regularly brought into the presence of God by every other member, something creative is sure to happen.

● *Prayer That Is More Than Words*

Tentative rules have been set up. Now comes the most vital experience of all. Each person present is asked to give a brief answer to a question which the group will select, such as:

What lack in yourself do you feel most deeply?

What kind of person do you want to become?

What change would you like to see on your campus or in your job?

What, specifically, do you commit yourself to do in order to bring about that change?

Then, going around the semicircle, each one prays, whether with or without words. Not many evenings will pass before someone when it comes to this climax of the meeting will simply express gratitude that there is such a group where one can be one's genuine self and where there is the feeling of trust and friendliness to back one up against the suctions of the business and academic world. Sometimes you hear a girl saying something like this (Helen prayed with almost exactly these words last night): "O God, we have a good deal of light on international questions and the big things, but it's awfully hard to do what's right in the little things. In the shop where I was working this morning I found it mighty difficult not to answer back when one of the girls criticized the way I was working. Help me to understand better the people I am working with. Amen."

The dangers of such close-up comradeship are obvious. It can easily become short-circuited into the hell which is preoccupation with petty things. The members, before they know what is happening, may be introspectively manicuring their little souls in an ivory tower instead of grappling with significant issues in the arena. What youth needs is to be "more daring than devout." That is why there has to be, upon the discussion and meditation of the little group, the unceasing pressure of God's "Cosmic Effort that would lift all and save all"—the mortgaged homes of strikers as well as intoxicated freshmen, the half-empty stomachs of slum children as well as the poise of exasperated shopgirls.

● *New Tasks for the Minister*

The minister's job is to help bring into the group persons who are cut by the sharp edge of organized brutality. The presence of a communist occasionally will do no harm. You can't sit down with a communist for two hours and ever again be quite so serene about the kind of exploitation that sometimes piously occupies the more expensive pews. If you can get an honest-to-goodness fascist to come in for an evening and ventilate his prejudices, the members will also learn something; they may learn, for example, that inertia is also something to be reckoned with, as well as the grace of God.

Most of all, the minister's job is to keep himself alert and sensitive, in readiness for any personal opening that may arise. Soon or late, somebody in the group is bound to ask for an interview. That may mean that a shell is cracking and that a soul is about to hatch. If he is wise the minister, at the opportune time, will drop every committee meeting that so easily besets him, and if he is lucky he will have a hill or a lonely road on which to walk for two or four hours with the member who definitely wants personal help. No matter what the problem—and it will always be deeper than what appears in front of the gilded curtain—the relationship established and nurtured by the intimacy of the small group will prove a godsend.

● *The Atmosphere Of Trust*

The minister will now know that what is wanted of him is not a voice but an ear, not advice but the atmosphere of trust, not a surgeon who will cut out a festering memory but a friend who with him will reach down to the bottom of the reservoir of the past where something dead has for years been poisoning the stream of consciousness. A false step in this crisis and the person seeking help may be frightened away for good. The minister realizing this becomes nervous. Then he remembers what the fellowship of the group has taught him: that the process to which he now commits himself can be trusted. After all, this student with what seems to him a crushing problem is neither unique nor alone. Nearly everybody is in the same boat. Together you and he reach down and grope around the bottom for the terrifying shock that happened in childhood or the emotional habit that lies hidden away down there in the mud like a decaying thing that insists on spoiling a man's thinking at its source.

He probes and you encourage him to probe in the mud of forgotten memories, forgotten because so disagreeable. Something soft is struck. At last! You both take a deep breath and reach down and pull it up for a good look. Not an easy thing to do, but there is no stopping now.

When you get it to the surface, it is bad but not quite so bad as he had thought. The fellow who before was curiously inhibited from doing his share in social action, can now be wholehearted, and he can tell himself that he is a war-resister not because of some secret cowardice but because he has won through to the courage of "fear that has said its prayers," to freedom from a past that has been faced and then handed over to God.

● *Not a Substitute for Church Gatherings*

The small intimate group is no panacea. It may, but it probably won't, work with all or most of the young people from seventeen years on, connected with the church. Apparently it meets the sustained interest of only a minority.

It is not a substitute for the usual Sunday gatherings of young people, which have their own peculiar and well-tested methods. It is only an attempt to meet the special need of a few young people who if they are neglected may either fanatically march with Moscow or cynically stop marching in any direction, but who if they are refreshed and reinforced by membership in a prayer group that plans social action, may prove to be, in the church and in the world, salt that does not lose its savor. Give them "the fellowship of the Catacombs" and they may exhibit "the courage of the Coliseum."

The Spring issue of the

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• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

THE ministry of Rev. FREDERICK W. NORWOOD has been world-wide. Throughout the English-speaking world he is known as a prophet of peace and brotherhood. Dr. Norwood is an Australian by birth, and came into fame through his distinguished service as minister of the City Temple in London.

Preceding his call to the presidency of the Federal Council of Churches, Rev. EDGAR DEWITT JONES had become well known as minister during a quarter-century of two important churches—First Christian Church, Bloomington, Ill., and Central Woodward Christian Church, Detroit. Many books have come from his pen—books of sermons, of biography and fiction.

During the long ministry of Rev. CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY, he has held but three pastorates: First Presbyterian Church, Paterson, N. J., Arch Street Church, Philadelphia, and First Church, Pittsburgh. He has been a director of Princeton and Westminster Seminaries, and was moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. in 1924-5.

*Following a period of service as presi*dent of two colleges, Rev. BURRIS JENKINS, in 1907, became minister of the Linwood Boulevard Christian Church, Kansas City, Mo. He still ministers to this church, which now bears the title "Linwood Community Church."

Rev. BERNARD C. CLAUSEN *was ordained* in the Baptist ministry, and spent thirteen years as pastor of the First Baptist Church, Syracuse, N. Y. During the past four years he has ministered at First Church in Pittsburgh.

About eight years ago Rev. SAMUEL HARKNESS came from the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Kansas City, Mo., to the Winnetka Congregational Church, on the north rim of Chicago. His is a community church comprising in its membership people from a score of denominations.

Rev. CHARLES X. HUTCHINSON, JR., *is* minister of the Swift Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, Sagamore, Mass. He was formerly one of the secretaries of the Adult Education Movement of New York.

Rev. FRANK HALLIDAY FERRIS *is pastor* of Fairmount Presbyterian Church, Cleveland, O.

Rev. ALLAN A. HUNTER *ministers at* Mt. Hollywood Congregational Church, Los Angeles, Cal.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

THOMAS F. OPIE, St. John's Episcopal, Olney, Md. "The Divine Ultimate." John 6:68—"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

B. Z. STAMBAUGH, Church of Our Savior, Akron, O. "Jesus Goes Farther." Luke 24:28—"He made as though he would go farther."

HARRY C. DOUGHERTY, Parkland Christian, Louisville, Ky. "Youth Well Reported." 1 Tim. 4:12—"Let no man despise thy youth." Acts 16:1, 2—"And he came . . . to Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy. . . . The same was well reported."

CLYDE H. WILCOX, First Congregational, Allegan, Mich. "Where Is Your Citizenship?" Eph. 2:19—". . . you share citizenship with God's people and are members of his family." (Weymouth)

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

. . . . . .
Title of sermon

. . . . . .
Text used (write out the text)

. . . . . .
Name of minister

. . . . . .
Name of church

. . . . . .
Address

O. L. ICE, Wilkinsburgh Baptist, Pittsburgh, Pa. "The Beyond That Is Within." 1 John 4:6—"We are of God."

JOHN F. C. GREEN, Congregational, McKeesport, Pa. "Wisdom's End and Faith's Beginning." Psa. 107:27, 28a—"At their wits' end, then they cry unto the Lord."

ARTHUR M. DAVIDSON, Methodist, Great Neck, N. Y. "A Man in Christ." 2 Cor. 5:17—"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

JOHN W. HUTCHINSON, Congregational, West Suffield, Conn. "The Tyranny of Things." Luke 10:41—"Martha, Martha, thou art troubled and anxious about many things."

GLEN L. RICE, First Presbyterian, Grand Island, Neb. "Famous Lies That Need to be Exposed." Isa. 28:15—"For we have made lies our refuge."

CLIFFORD A. NELSON, Gloria Dei Evangelical Lutheran, St. Paul, Minn. "A Religion of Make-Believe." Matt. 11:16, 17, 19—"But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the marketplaces, who call unto their fellows and say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not mourn . . . And wisdom is justified by her works."

FRED E. MILES, Methodist Episcopal, South Orange, N. J. "The Way to Know God." Jer. 22:16—"He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Was not this to know me? saith Jehovah."

JOSEPH C. CARROLL, Second Baptist, Lafayette, Ind. "The Survival of the Unfit." Gal. 6:2—"Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE MONTH of March, 1938, will go down in history as the most exciting and ominous since the World War. It threw up into bold relief a new master of Europe, and it threw down in ruins the last remaining vestiges of the post-war structure of peace.

Hitler Comes to Austria's Rescue!

Hitler has defied every pacific measure conceived to deter an aggressor. Not only so, but he has exploded the whole legalistic conception by which an aggressor was supposed to be identified. He took over an unwilling Austria without shedding a drop of blood in a military action. Indeed he got himself *invited* to come in and take over the country! On the legal basis of the situation he has put himself in the position of an actual friend of Austria running to her aid when her peace was imperiled! How can you apply sanctions to that? How can you offer any kind of opposition to it? This is consummate diabolism. It makes Japan's technique of slaughtering the Chinese without calling it war, seem utterly crude and clumsy. The whole world is now arming feverishly. Every nation is thinking of itself and its own resources. Also of its possible alliances. In the mad race for armaments, let the devil take the hindmost! Up to now, Uncle Sam is well out in front with a billion and a quarter appropriated for a supernavy, another billion required to carry out the commitments in the initial appropriation, nearly a billion asked for by the army to prepare a land force of more than a million fighting troops, and the people wrought up to such a pitch of fear and despair that politicians know the sky is the limit. And you and I, brother ministers, must preach the gospel of Christ next Sunday!

The Book of the Month

THE PREPARATION AND DELIVERY OF SERMONS. *By Carl S. Patton. Willett, Clark & Company, $2.00.*

I WONDER if I dare to begin this review of another man's work by reporting the finest compliment I ever received? I had been speaking to an assembly of ministers and my youthful daughter was present. As we came away, she said: "Daddy, what you did was to make those ministers believe that their work was the most important thing in the world." No doubt, she was a biased critic, but I would rather be worthy of that remark than of any comment I ever heard on my work. This same comment I now transfer to Dr. Patton. He makes ministers believe that their job is the most important thing in the world. And this he does not by lifting the ministry up to some transcendental plane, but by illuminating the commonplace routine which underlies all its more thrilling public activity. He is the wisest and most vital counselor of preachers in America today. His genius lies in his fine understanding and high appraisal of the minister's *professional* life. He despises no detail of sermon making or preaching of sermons, but with infinite common sense he discusses what we ought to preach about, the structure of the sermon, its style (conversational or "eloquent"), its length (here I got a big jolt!), its preparation (wasting time in choice of subjects, advantages of writing, appropriate vocabulary), its delivery (voice, "handling one's breath," enunciation, the opening sentence, mannerisms)—but these are just samples of endless concrete items which fill this book. One intensely interesting section is devoted to "the absence of sinners from the congregation"! I didn't imagine that, after all these years, I would find a book on homiletics so fascinating, but this one snared me—after I picked it up I could not lay it down until I had read every word. Incidentally, I may add that my daughter made her remark *after* I had read this book!

A Thought for the Month

YOU recall the astronomer—was it Laplace?—who said that he had searched the heavens with his telescope, and found no God. His report shocked people's faith, because they had thought of God as enthroned somewhere in the sky or above it, issuing his laws to the cosmos.

Knowing God and Known of Him

But the astronomer really rendered a great service to faith, because he brought home the truth that when you search for God as an Object among other objects you cannot find him. I do not care to what philosophical school you belong, if you go out searching for God all you have at the end of your search is an object of your own thought, a projection of your finite human mind. In the New Testament there is a deep undercurrent of impatience with this attempt by human wisdom to find God. The controlling Christian conviction is not that God is an object of our thought, but that we are the objects of his grace. Our knowledge of him is thus not intellectual knowledge, but what Kirkegaard called "existential" knowledge, by which I take him to express the distinction between abstract cognition and immediate experience. Paul corrected himself once on this point. Writing to the Galatians he nearly slipped into the humanist error when he said, "Ye have known God," but he added, "or rather, have come to be known of God." The whole Christian outlook turns on this *"or rather."* We may not find God by searching for him with telescopes or microscopes or any other scientific apparatus, or by rational reflection. What knowledge we may have of him is his gift to us, which we appropriate by faith. The gospel is not the report of some man that he has discovered God, it is the good news that God has revealed himself to man. Our human knowledge is finite, partial, dim. We see only darkly, as in a mirror. We know only in part. The ineffable hope of Christian faith is that some day we shall know even as also we have been known.

Charles Clayton Morrison

A Special Selection of Books for Ministers Who Read The Christian Century Pulpit

Ten-Minute Sermons

By LEWIS H. CHRISMAN

Seventy-seven miniature sermons, full of color and light and with definite artistic structure, by a teacher of preachers. The ideas, addressed to those who are looking for inspiration with which to meet today's manifold problems, are "finds" for sermon-makers. Each will prove a seed which will flower in your own fertile mind.

$2.00.

Children's Sermons

Far-sighted ministers make every effort to encourage the habit of church attendance on the part of young people. Special children's sermons are used with marked success by many alert pastors. The two volumes mentioned below contain excellent examples of sermons that hold children's attention.

50 Sermon-Talks for Girls and Boys

BY CARL S. WEIST

The author has gained an enviable reputation as a preacher to young people. These sermons are the ones that were best liked by the children themselves. **$1.50.**

More Two-Minute Stories

BY CARL S. PATTON

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The author does not impose faith upon life; he evokes it out of experience. His method is one that reaches men and women who reject authoritarian religion. **$1.00.**

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